

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING AMONG MARRIED INDIVIDUALS IN PAKISTAN: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MARITAL SATISFACTION

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KEYWORDS

Emotional Intelligence, Marital Satisfaction, Psychological Well-being, Married individuals, Pakistan

CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Khan, F., Kamal, S., Habib, A., & Mirza, M. (2026). Emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among married individuals in Pakistan: The mediating role of marital satisfaction. *Pakistan Journal of Positive Psychology*, 3(1), 65-73.

ABSTRACT

One of the most important social institutions in Pakistan is marriage, and married people's psychological adjustment is directly tied to their comprehension and management of their emotions in a married relationship. Finding psychological resources that promote wellbeing in the context of marriage has therefore become crucial. The purpose of the current study was to examine the link between Pakistani married individuals' psychological well-being, emotional intelligence, and marital satisfaction as well as to emphasize the function of marital satisfaction as a mediator between the two. 200 married individuals from Pakistani cities were chosen as the sample using a convenience sampling approach. Data was collected from the participants using the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-4), the Flourishing Scale (FS), and the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10). According to the correlation analysis's findings, emotional intelligence and psychological well-being were significantly positively correlated, as was marital satisfaction and psychological well-being. Additionally, Marital Satisfaction exhibited a substantial partial mediating function in the link between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being, according to mediation analysis utilizing Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4). The findings also imply that the development of interpersonal skills and marital satisfaction may enhance the psychological well-being of married individuals in Pakistan, which has consequences for marriage-based psychoeducational programs and premarital counselling.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan marriage is a most important aspect of the social structure which has a significant impact on the identity, family life, health and overall well-being of a person (Qadir et al., 2005). Under such a collectivist and family-oriented culture, emotional understanding, expression, and regulation in marriage may have a profound impact on the psychological adaptation of the wives and husbands. Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the ability to recognise, understand, manage, and use emotions in oneself and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Habib et al., 2026), has been shown to be associated with higher levels of conflict management, empathy for others, and personal emotional regulation in intimate relationships (Davies et al., 2010). Because marriage involves continual communication and emotional cooperation between partners, it is conceivable that EI could have a theoretical

impact on marital functioning and psychological health of the partners (Jardine et al., 2022; Habib et al., 2026). Psychological well-being (PWB) is an individual's self-perception of success in the following important areas: a meaningful life, rewarding relationships, day-to-day engagement, competence, and an optimistic outlook (Diener et al., 2010). Several of these domains, especially supportive connections and sense of purpose, are directly related to the quality of the relationship, and the marriage context is an important context in which to foster or deplete psychological well-being. This effect can also happen indirectly, by means of the quality of the marriage itself, known as marital satisfaction (Milani et al., 2020). Marital satisfaction is an individual's general rating of satisfaction with the marriage, individual, and marriage relationship (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Emotionally intelligent individuals, in general, can cope better with daily marital stresses, show empathy, and have a better ability to solve their disagreements in a constructive manner (Siddiqi & Majeed, 2021), thus resulting in marital satisfaction, and consequently, psychological well-being. The present study thus investigates the effect of Emotional Intelligence on predicting Psychological well-being of married people in Pakistan while Marital Satisfaction is a mediator.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a consistent connection between EI and psychological well-being/adjustment since Salovey and Mayer's (1990) initial proposal. Bar-On (2000) has noted that since Salovey and Mayer (1990) proposed the idea, EI has been tied to psychological well-being and adjustment. The higher the EI, the less stress and emotional distress reported, and more competence, optimism, and competence in everyday functioning to help maintain health and well-being (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Davies et al. (2010) utilized confirmatory factor analysis to validate a shortened version of the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) by Schutte et al. (1998), which had good model fit for its five underlying factors, and the total score had moderate associations with other adjustment and functioning scales (Balakrishnan & Saklofske, 2015). In Pakistan, EI had been studied more in relation to adjustment outcome than psychological well-being (Batool & Khalid, 2011), however, previous studies posited the positive relationship between the two as psychological well-being is linked to relational adjustment.

There has also been an examination of EI and well-being specifically with regard to marital outcomes. According to the latest systematic review of Pakistani studies, all the studies reviewed correlated EI and marital happiness positively (Gkintoni et al., 2025). According to Batool and Khalid (2011), marital quality among 200 married couples in Pakistan was significantly explained by EI, whereas Siddiqi and Majeed (2021) studied 240 dual-earner couples of which EI accounted for the highest proportion of variance in marital adjustment among the variables they studied. A weak but statistically significant positive correlation between dyadic satisfaction and EI was also found by Zaidi and Shoaib (2022) in 205 married individuals. Pakistani couples are also found to be insulated from negative psychological impacts of marriage stressors, such as perceived stress on marital satisfaction (Gkintoni et al., 2025) and this insulation is found to be present even in long-distance marriages. A cross cultural meta-analysis revealed that EI was positively and highly related to relationship satisfaction across countries (Jardine et al., 2022), and results from a structured EI training showed significant increase in psychological well-being, sexual quality of life and marital satisfaction in Iranian women, which suggested that EI might be more a causal factor than a correlational one on marital outcomes (Milani et al., 2020).

Similarly, Pakistani studies support the second pathway between psychological well-being and marital satisfaction from the proposed model. In the cross-sectional study of married people in various cities across Pakistan, marital satisfaction was revealed to be highly correlated with their satisfaction with life (Naveed & Rasool, 2025). In the study of conflict resolution among working men of Pakistan, marital satisfaction was found to predict psychological well-being (Ali et al., 2024). Structural modelling studies outside of Pakistan indicated that psychological well-being mediated between individual difference factors relating to self-differentiation and perceived social support and marital satisfaction (Dashti, 2025), whereas longitudinal studies on older married couples showed that marital satisfaction buffered the impact of the health of one partner on the psychological well-being of both partners, which further confirms the role of marriage as an important context for the psychological functioning of adults in general.

This literature shows three interrelated pathways in Pakistan: EI is linked to psychological well-being; marital satisfaction is consistently linked with psychological well-being (Gkintoni et al., 2025); and EI is linked to marital

satisfaction. However, no study has explored all three constructs together in one mediational model by validated short measures in a sample of married population in Pakistan. Marital satisfaction and psychological well-being in Pakistan has so far been studied in terms of its predictors such as conflict resolution style and religiosity (Ali et al., 2024; Aman et al., 2019), but the role of EI as a correlate of psychological well-being is not touched upon (Siddiq & Majeed, 2021; Zaidi & Shoaib, 2022). The present study aims to fill this lacuna. The results of the western marital studies cannot be applied to the Pakistani married people as Pakistan is a collectivist society in which the family members' involvement and the roles played by the wife and husband in marriage have an impact on the day to day interaction between the two and the way they interact differs from that of the western society (Qadir et al., 2005). The role of marital satisfaction in the relationship between EI and psychological well-being in this Pakistani cultural context might help understand the positive impact of being emotionally intelligent on psychological outcomes and provide some insights for pre-marital counseling and marriage oriented psychoeducation programs in Pakistan (Gkintoni et al., 2025).

Hypotheses

1. Emotional Intelligence will be positively associated with Psychological Well-being among married individuals in Pakistan.
2. Emotional Intelligence will be positively associated with Marital Satisfaction among married individuals in Pakistan.
3. Marital Satisfaction will be positively associated with Psychological Well-being among married individuals in Pakistan.
4. Marital Satisfaction will significantly mediate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-being among married individuals in Pakistan.

III. METHOD

Participants

The current study will investigate the association between Pakistani married individuals' psychological well-being, marital satisfaction, and emotional intelligence using a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research methodology. This design is appropriate for the current study as it was carried out to ascertain whether there were any correlations between the study's variables and to look at the mediating function of one variable marital satisfaction without changing any of the other variables. Convenience sampling was used to choose married couples husbands and wives from Pakistani cities. Participants must be at least eighteen years old, married, and living with their spouse, as well as be able to read and comprehend Urdu or English. People who are single (divorced, widowed, or separated) will not be featured. A demographic information sheet includes information on age, gender, education, employment, length of marriage, and family structure (nuclear or joint).

Measures

Three standardized self-report questionnaires, a demographic form, and an informed consent form that explains the study's goal, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the opportunity to withdraw at any time were used to operationalize the study's major variables. **[I] The Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10):** Emotional intelligence was measured using the 10-item Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale, or BEIS-10 (Davies et al., 2010). Appraisal of Own Emotions, Appraisal of Others' Emotions, Regulation of Own Emotions, Regulation of Others' Emotions, and Utilization of Emotions are the five basic elements covered by this scale, which provides a comprehensive assessment of emotional intelligence. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was used to gauge the participants' responses. There are no reverse-coded elements in the measure. An individual's emotional intelligence increases with their BEIS-10 score. Previous studies have shown that the scale has strong internal consistency, with reliability coefficients (α) typically ranging from .74 to .91. **[II] Flourishing Scale (FS):** The eight-item Flourishing Scale-FS (Diener et al., 2010) was used to measure psychological well-being. With markers of purpose, supportive connections, engagement, competence, optimism, and social respect, this measure provides a global evaluation of psychological well-being. Participants scored each item on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The measure does not contain any reverse-coded elements. A person's psychological well-being increases with their FS score. The scale has

demonstrated strong internal consistency in earlier research, with reliability coefficients (α) typically ranging from .87 to .91. **[III] Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-4):** The four-item Couples Satisfaction Index-CSI-4 was used to assess marital satisfaction (Funk & Rogge, 2007). In addition to an overall satisfaction rating for the relationship, this scale incorporates indications of warmth and reward as well as a worldwide level of pleasure assessment. The following item-specific response scales were used to collect responses from the participants: Three items were rated on a 6-point scale (0 = not at all – 5 = entirely), and one item was rated on a 7-point range (0 = very dissatisfied – 6 = perfect). There aren't any reverse-coded things. Significant marital discontent is indicated by scores below 13.5 on the CSI-4, whereas higher values indicate more marital satisfaction. The scale has demonstrated strong internal consistency in previous research, with reliability coefficients (α) often falling between .94 and .98.

Procedure and Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, the authors or developers of evaluation instruments used (Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-4), Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10), Flourishing Scale (FS)) gave written consent. The questionnaires were distributed after providing detailed information to married couples about the purpose and methodology of the study which included the topics: psychological well-being, marital satisfaction, and emotional intelligence. One-on-one, married couples living in cities in Pakistan were given a questionnaire booklet, which included the BEIS-10, the CSI-4, the Flourishing Scale and the demographic information sheet. The written instructions were given to all participants in the same manner to minimise the effects of response bias and ensure consistency in data collection sessions. It took participants 15-20 minutes to fill out the complete questionnaire packet. Ethical approval was granted before data collection from the appropriate departmental/university Ethics Review Committee and all ethical issues were adhered to throughout the study. Each participant gave written informed consent and no personally identifiable data was collected prior to data collection. It was indicated that the members' answers would be treated strictly as confidential and would not be used for anything else except for academic publications and research. It was clear to the participants that they had the right to drop out of this research at any time without being negatively affected socially, academically or personally. The potential for physical and psychological harm was not expected and was not reported from participation in this study.

Data Analysis Plan

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 27 was used to gather the descriptive statistics and perform all statistical analysis. For every demographic and research variable, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were employed. Reliability study utilizing Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency of the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10), Flourishing Scale (FS), and Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-4). Using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis, the bivariate correlations between emotional intelligence, marital satisfaction, and psychological well-being were investigated. Emotional intelligence was then used as an independent predictor of psychological well-being and marital satisfaction, respectively, in a number of multiple linear regression models. The assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and lack of multicollinearity were examined before the regression analysis to make sure the data was appropriate for regression analysis. Lastly, the SPSS-based Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) was utilized to assess the mediating role of marital satisfaction between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. The significance of the indirect (mediating) effect was ascertained using bootstrapped confidence intervals (5,000 resamples) that were also bias-corrected. The direct effect of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being, the indirect effect via marital satisfaction, and the total effect were all estimated in a single step. Permission was taken from universities. Before any data was collected, the research participants gave their informed consent. Along with the measures, the participants also received a demographic sheet. The study effort was conducted with ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and debriefing. A frequency distribution was utilized to calculate the frequency and percentage of variables. Using descriptive statistics, the average score for each variable was determined. The relationship between the variables was ascertained by correlation analysis. An independent t-test statistical analysis to determine the significance difference between these variables. The statistical version SPSS version-23 was used for data analysis with a significance level of less than 0.05 applied to all analyses.

IV. RESULTS

Table I: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 200)

Variables	f	%
Age		
20–30 years	60	30.0
31–40 years	100	50.0
41–50 years	40	20.0
Gender		
Male	100	50.0
Female	100	50.0
Education		
Intermediate	40	20.0
Bachelors	120	60.0
Masters	40	20.0
Occupation		
Employed	40	20.0
Unemployed / Housewife	60	30.0
Self-employed / Business	60	30.0
Other	40	20.0
Duration of Marriage		
Less than 5 years	100	50.0
5–10 years	60	30.0
More than 10 years	40	20.0
Family System		
Nuclear	120	60.0
Joint	80	40.0

The demographic information about the sample (N = 200) is displayed in Table 1. Most participants were aged 31–40 years (50%), followed by 20–30 years (30%) and 41–50 years (20%), with an equal male-female split (50% each). The majority of respondents had a Bachelor's degree (60%) with an even split between Intermediate (20%) and Masters (20%). The category housewives and self-employed people accounted for 30% each, while the other categories represented 20% each. Of those who were married, 50% had been married less than 5 years, 30% for 5–10 years and 20% for more than 10 years; the majority (60%) were from nuclear family systems. In general, the sample had a relatively equal distribution between age, education and family structure.

Table II: Normality and Psychometrics of Study Variables (N = 200)

Variables	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	44.60	3.86	39.00	51.00	0.15	-1.32	.916
Psychological Well-being (FST)	41.50	3.84	34.00	47.00	-0.28	-0.75	.933
Marital Satisfaction (CSI)	17.34	2.03	12.00	21.00	-0.40	-0.02	.884

Descriptive statistics and reliability estimate for the three variables in the study are presented in Table 2. Emotional Intelligence ($M = 44.60$, $SD = 3.86$) showed a skewness value of 0.15 and kurtosis of -1.32, while Psychological Well-being ($M = 41.50$, $SD = 3.84$) showed skewness of -0.28 and kurtosis of -0.75, and Marital Satisfaction ($M = 17.34$, $SD = 2.03$) showed skewness of -0.40 and kurtosis of -0.02. All skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range of ± 2 , and thus the data were deemed normally distributed, thereby allowing parametric statistical procedures (correlation and PROCESS-based regression) to be used. In addition, the study's three measurement scales, Emotional Intelligence ($\alpha = .916$), Psychological Well-being ($\alpha = .933$), and Marital Satisfaction ($\alpha = .884$), were all found to have an acceptable level of internal consistency and reliability ($\alpha = .70$).

Table III: Pearson Correlation among Emotional Intelligence, Marital Satisfaction, and Psychological Well-being

Variables	1	2	3
1. Emotional Intelligence	—	.834**	.482**
2. Psychological Well-being		—	.601**
3. Marital Satisfaction			—

** $p < .01$

The findings of the Pearson correlation test showed that there was a significant and positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-being ($r = .83$, $p < .01$) which supported the Hypothesis 1. The results of correlation also showed that there was a significant positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Marital Satisfaction ($r = .48$, $p < .01$) which supported Hypothesis 2. Additionally, Marital Satisfaction was also found to be significantly positively correlated with Psychological Well-being ($r = .60$, $p < .01$) and supported Hypothesis 3. The strongest link was the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-being: Emotionally intelligent people reported significantly higher levels of psychological well-being, as well as having more positive relationships with their partners.

Table IV: Marital Satisfaction as Mediator between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-being (PROCESS Model 4, N = 200)

Predictors	Marital Satisfaction		Psychological Well-being	
	B	95% CI	B	95% CI
Constant	6.02**	[3.13, 8.91]	1.58	[-1.69, 4.85]
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	.25**	[.19, .32]	.70**	[.62, .78]
Marital Satisfaction (CSI)	—	—	.49**	[.34, .64]
R ²	.23		.75	
F	60.05**		291.59**	

** $p < .01$

Marital Satisfaction and Psychological Well-being are two distinct outcome variables that were estimated in the same PROCESS Model 4 run (paths a and b/c', respectively), and not a two-step hierarchical model of a single outcome variable; thus, the ΔR^2 and ΔF are not applicable and are not reported. The p-values for all statistical values in this table are from the PROCESS macro output. Table 4 shows, the relationship between EI and Psychological Well-being was significantly mediated by Marital Satisfaction, in support of H4. EI significantly predicted Marital Satisfaction ($B = .25$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [.19, .32], $R^2 = .23$, $F = 60.05$), and both EI ($B = .70$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [.62, .78]) and Marital Satisfaction ($B = .49$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [.34, .64]) significantly predicted PWB ($R^2 = .75$, $F = 291.59$). The indirect effect of EI on PWB through Marital Satisfaction was significant ($B = .12$, BootSE = .02, 95% BootCI [.08, .18]) while the direct effect of EI on PWB was still significant ($B = .70$) even after controlling the mediator, suggesting that Marital Satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between EI and PWB.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study hypothesized that there would be a direct and indirect relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of married people in Pakistan. The results of this study generally supported all the proposed relationships, and demonstrated that emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction are important psychological assets that can positively affect married people's psychological well-being. In accordance with the first hypothesis (H1), the results showed that there is a strong positive relationship between psychological well-being and emotional intelligence among married people of Pakistan; those who have better perception, understanding, regulation and usage of their emotions found themselves in better psychological state. This aligns with theoretical and empirical findings that the more positive one perceives one's emotional self, and the more one can control one's emotions, the less psychologically uncomfortable one is, and the better one feels (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), as well as with Bar-On's (2000) observation that since the inception of the construct (Salovey and Mayer, 1990), EI has been consistently associated with psychological adjustment and well-being. This finding was also supported by Gkintoni et al. (2025) who pointed out that in Pakistani culture, emotionally intelligent people also had better psychological and relational functioning.

Hypothesis 2, which predicted that there would be a positive correlation between EI and marital satisfaction among married people, was also confirmed, with those reporting higher levels of EI indicating higher levels of marital happiness. This is in line with Batool and Khalid (2011) who reported that EI explained a significant proportion of variance in marital quality among the 200 couples in Pakistan and Siddiq and Majeed (2021) who concluded that EI was the best predictor of marital adjustment among 240 dual-earner couples. A similar finding of a high correlation between EI and satisfaction with marriage was observed by Zaidi and Shoaib (2022) in 205 married participants, and by Jardine et al. (2022) in a cross-cultural meta-analysis, which revealed a significant positive relationship between EI and relationship satisfaction across the study samples. In a thorough review of the Pakistani literature, the correlation between EI and marital satisfaction was observed across all the studies to be positive (Gkintoni et al., 2025). Hypothesis 3, which predicted a positive relationship between psychological well-being and marital satisfaction was also confirmed, with a positive correlation between increased marital satisfaction with increased psychological well-being. This is in line with the significance of the relationship found between subjective quality of life and marital happiness by Naveed and Rasool (2025) in the cities of Pakistan and psychological wellness significantly predicted by marital satisfaction by Ali et al. (2024) among male workers of cities in Pakistan. This association between marriage and adult psychological functioning is further supported by life-long research with older married couples, which finds satisfaction in marriage to be a stable context for psychological functioning across the lifespan (An et al., 2025), regardless of culture or age.

Lastly, the mediation analysis supported Hypothesis 4 which predicted that marital satisfaction would mediate the relationship between EI and psychological well-being, with EI having an independent effect on psychological well-being in addition to an indirect effect via marital satisfaction. This is in line with the theory that an emotionally competent individual is more likely to cope with marital stressors, understand his/her spouse, and solve marital issues through a constructive approach that will lead to marital satisfaction and consequently to psychological well-being (Siddiq & Majeed, 2021). Based on a study in Iran, it was also revealed that, structured EI training resulted in positive changes in psychological well-being and marital satisfaction and hence, emotional competencies were found to be causally associated with marital outcomes, not only in relation to each other, but also with their improvements following EI training (Milani et al., 2020). Results from the wider (non-marital) literature also suggest that psychological well-being acts as a mediator between self-differentiation and marital satisfaction, suggesting that self-differentiation affects marital outcomes both directly and indirectly via psychological well-being (Dashti, 2025). Interestingly, there are no conflicting or insignificant findings reported in the literature of Pakistan reviewed on the topic of EI, marital satisfaction, and psychological well-being which further strengthens the current results. It is particularly beneficial to confirm the relationship of marital roles and extended family involvement because these two variables have greater impact on day-to-day marital interaction in a collectivist society such as Pakistan than in Western societies, where marital research cannot be presumed to be representative of married Pakistanis (Qadir et al., 2005). The current findings, therefore, build on previous studies

in Pakistan investigating psychological well-being, marital satisfaction, and emotional intelligence individually (Gkintoni et al., 2025), by including all three factors in a single mediational model.

Strengths and Limitations

The present study has some merits. It bridges the gap in the literature by integrating Marital Satisfaction and Emotional Intelligence in one mediational model in the context of Pakistan (Gkintoni et al., 2025). For this sample, the BEIS-10, FS, and CSI-4 had good internal consistency $\alpha = .884-.933$. A mediation test of marital satisfaction was statistically rigorously conducted using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 4) with bootstrapped confidence intervals. Lastly, since Western and Pakistani contexts have different attitudes towards relationships, the results are not directly applicable to Western matrimonial research (Qadir et al, 2005). Nevertheless, there are issues with the current study that must be resolved. Longitudinal study would be helpful in establishing the temporal order of these interactions, since the cross-sectional design would make it impossible to draw causal conclusions about emotional intelligence, marital satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Second, because the study used a convenience sampling strategy and selected individuals from Pakistan's cities, the findings are less applicable to rural or other regions of the nation. Third, all of the research variables' assessments were self-report, which makes them vulnerable to typical method variation and social desirability bias. To supplement the results from self-reports, future research may include behavioural measures of marital functioning and/or multi-informant data (such as spousal reports).

VI. CONCLUSION

The current study revealed that Emotional Intelligence was a significant positive predictor of psychological well-being of married people in Pakistan and Marital Satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and psychological well-being. Emotionally intelligent individuals have higher psychological wellbeing directly and indirectly via more satisfying marriages, which demonstrates Marital Satisfaction as one of the psychological pathways in Pakistani culture. The results have utility for marriage-oriented psychoeducation and premarital counseling, and indicate the importance of further research over a longer period and with greater numbers.

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